improvement in road and rail linkages with the two ports?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATARAMAN): (a) During 9th Five Year Plan 1997—2002, it is proposed to enhance the POL handling capacity of Haldia by 7.5 million tonnes.

(b) Yes, Sir. It is proposed to take up infrastructure development by improvement/strengthening of roads in an around the Docks maintained by Calcutta Port Trust in phases. The railway tracks of Calcutta Dock system have been planned to be replaced during 9th Five Year Plan. Two additional locomotives are proposed to be procured at Haldia. Development of additional railway infrastructure inside and outside Haldia Dock is also proposed to be undertaken.

Sea worthiness of bulk carriers

2453. SHRI JAYANT KUMAR MALHOUTRA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Maritime Safety Committee raised the sea-worthiness age limit of bulk carriers from 20 to 30 years overlooking the recommendations of the International Maritime Organisation;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the mounting loss of ships in the recent past is due to the fact that aging ships have been pressed into service;

(c) if so, whether Government propose to undertake a comprehensive review of the safety standards of the bulk carriers on a priority basis; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) No Sir. The Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organisation did not consider any such proposal.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Sethusamudram Canal Project

2454. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to start work of SETHUSAMUDRAM CANAL PROJECT within the current year itself;

(b) whether his Ministry has requested the Ministry of Finance to allot finance for the said project;

(c) if so, the response from the Ministry of Finance in this regard;

(d) whether his Ministry is also considering to start the work of the said project with the help of either Japan or Germany; and

(e) whether the experts from the Japan or Germany visited the site of Sethusamudram Canal Project, and if so, what were their comments on the said project?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) The Department of Economic Affairs has been requested to pose the Project for technical assistance from the German and Japan Governments for conducting feasibility report.

Declaration of river Godavari as National Waterway

2455. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh submitted a proposal

to declare the river Godavari between Rajahmundry and Cherla as a National Waterways;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has written a letter on the 20th February, 1997 on this proposal; and

(c) if so, the status of this proposal?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) The proposal to declare Cherla-Rajamundry stretch of river Godavari as a National Waterway was formulated as per the recommendation of the National Transport Policy Committee.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The proposal is under process.

Un-utilised land of Kandla Port Trust

2456. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that out of 4123 acres of land, Kandla Port Trust has utilised 1769 acres of land for their use and the remaining 2354 acres of land is lying un-utilised;

(b) whether the State Government of Gujarat had repeatedly represented to Government to hand over the unutilised land for industrial development at Gandhinagar;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government have considered the above representations;

(e) if so, by when the surplus land is proposed to be handed over to the State Government for developing the same; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (f) Yes, Sir. There is no surplus land at Kandla and the lands presently lying unutilised are required for the development of the port and the port's township.

World Bank Assistance for Development of State and National Highways

2457. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Bank is assisting for improvement and development of State and National Highways;

(b) if so, the details of the assistance expected in 1997-98 and how it will be utilised, State-wise; and

(c) the assistance proposed for 'express roads' suggested by the Andhra Pradesh Government?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During 1997-98, a loan amounting to US $ 385.5 million is expected to be signed for improvement of State Highways in Andhra Pradesh.

(c) No 'express roads' is proposed to be taken up in Andhra Pradesh under World Bank Loan assistance.

Development of Container Transhipment Terminal

2458. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to develop a Container Transhipment Terminal (CTT) in South on the basis of study made by the